

Program to Encourage Active, Rewarding Lives for Seniors (PEARLS) Evaluation Summary

PEARLS is a home-based program of detecting and managing minor depression among older adults. From January 2000 to May 2003, the University of Washington Health Promotion Research Center (HPRC) conducted a randomized controlled PEARLS trial with case management clients from Aging and Disability Services (ADS) and clients from Senior Services. Researchers randomly assigned 138 t clients 60 years of age or older with minor depression or dysthymia to the PEARLS intervention (n=72) or usual care (n=66). The PEARLS intervention included problem-solving treatment, social and physical activation, and potential recommendations to patients' physicians regarding antidepressant medications. Researchers (Paul Ciechanowski, et. al.) compared assessments of depression and quality of life at 12 months with baseline assessments.

The research study showed PEARLS home-based depression management counseling significantly reduced depression symptoms and improved health status in chronically medically ill older adults with minor depression. The PEARLS intervention resulted in lower severity and greater remission of depression among intervention participants when compared to participants in the usual care group. PEARLS cost \$630 per participant per year, which included eight in-home sessions with a social worker for 19 weeks and monthly follow-up phone calls. HPRC used Center for Disease Control grant funds for the study.

The Journal of the American Medical Association published study results. See <http://www.cityofseattle.net/humanservices/aging/Staff-Peers/PEARLSJAMA4-04.pdf>